JAHANGIR

Jahangir was born to a life tailor-made for happiness; in addition to wealth and fame, he held a special place in his father's heart. Growing up into a sensitive young man, he began to resent those who took his father's attentions away from him. What he failed to comprehend was that his father Akbar, as the Mughal Emperor, had many demands on his time, ruling over a vast empire. This tragic lack of communication led to a conflict with his father whom he held in love and esteem.

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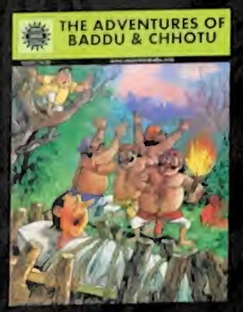

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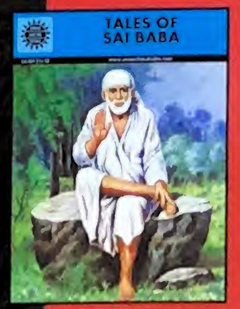

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BRAVEHEARTS

AMAR CHITRA KATHA

JAHANGIR

THE GENTLE MUGHAL

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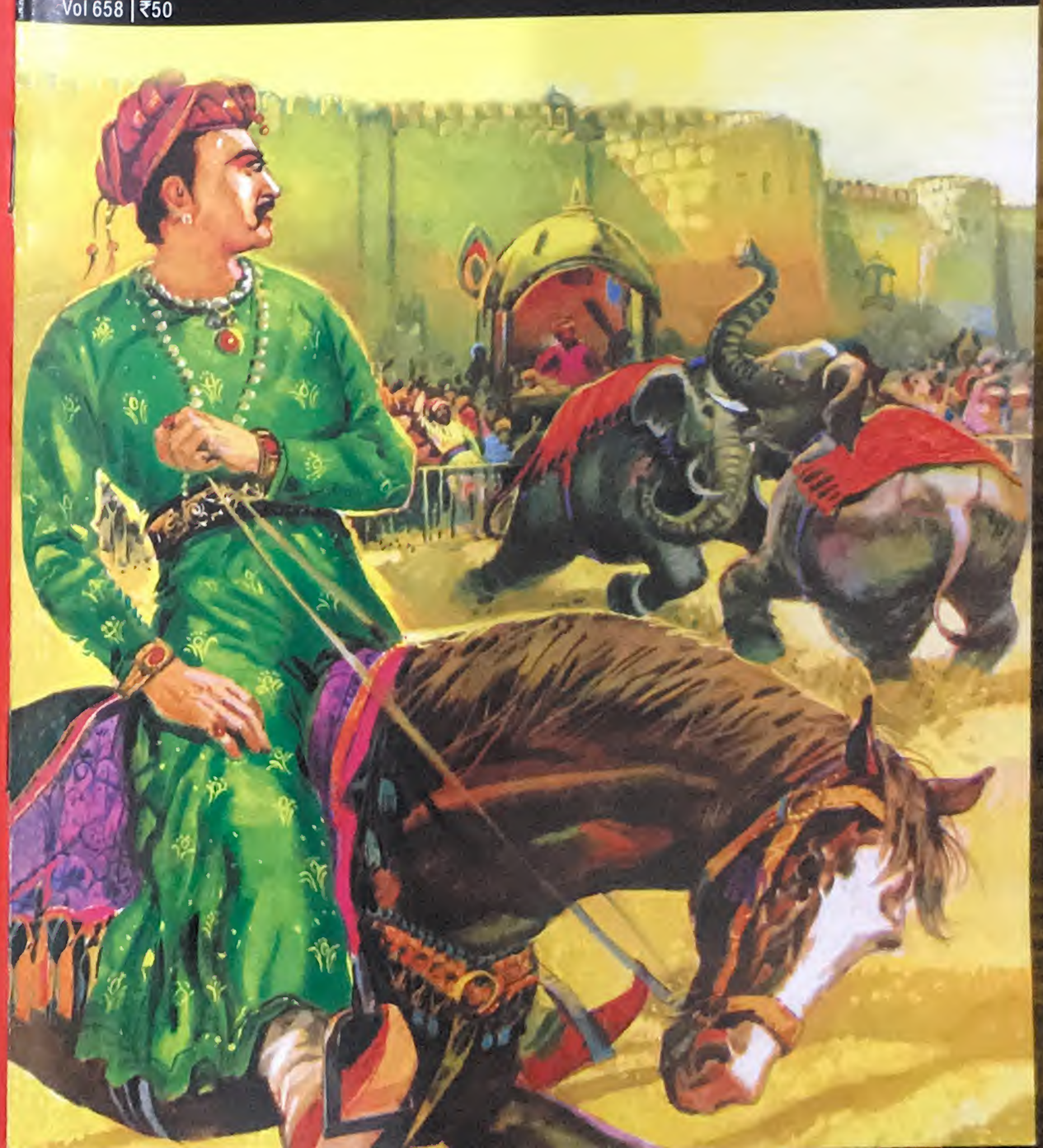


JAHANGIR

IT WAS THE YEAR 1569. AKBAR, THE MUGHAL EMPEROR, HAD JUST SEEN OFF HIS RAJPUT WIFE, JODHABAI. SHE WAS ON HER WAY TO SIKRI, THE VILLAGE WHERE SAINT SHEIKH SALIM CHISHTI LIVED.

ALL THE CHILDREN BORN TO ME HERE AT AGRA HAVE DIED. GOD WILLING, THE CHILD BORN IN THE HOME OF THE SAINT WILL LIVE TO BE MY HEIR.

ON HER WAY TO SIKRI, JODHABAI WAS LOST IN THOUGHT.

PERHAPS IT'S THE WILL OF GOD THAT THE FUTURE EMPEROR SHOULD BE BORN IN THE HUMBLE HOME OF AN ASCETIC.

WHEN JODHABAI REACHED THE SAINT'S HOME, HIS DAUGHTER AND DAUGHTER-IN-LAW CAME OUT TO RECEIVE HER.

WELCOME, SISTER. YOU WILL FIND PEACE AND CONTENTMENT HERE.

FOR AKBAR, AT AGRA, HOWEVER, THERE WAS ONLY ANXIETY.

WILL IT BE A BOY? WILL HE BE BLESSED WITH A LONG LIFE?

AT LAST, ON THE EVENING OF AUGUST 30, 1569 —

JAHANPANAH, IT'S A BOY! A FINE HEALTHY INFANT.

ALLAH BE PRAISED!

A WEEK LATER, AKBAR CAME TO SIKRI TO SEE HIS SON.

SHAIKHU BABA! MY HEIR!

AND FROM THAT DAY, THOUGH THE PRINCE WAS FORMALLY NAMED SALIM AFTER SHEIKH SALIM CHISHTI, AKBAR ALWAYS CALLED HIM SHAIKHU BABA.

WITHIN THE NEXT THREE YEARS AKBAR BECAME THE FATHER OF TWO MORE SONS, MURAD AND DANIYAL. WHEN SALIM WAS FOUR —

MAULANA HARVI, PRINCE SALIM IS NOW YOUR WARD. EDUCATE HIM. TRAIN HIM UP TO BE A FIT RULER!

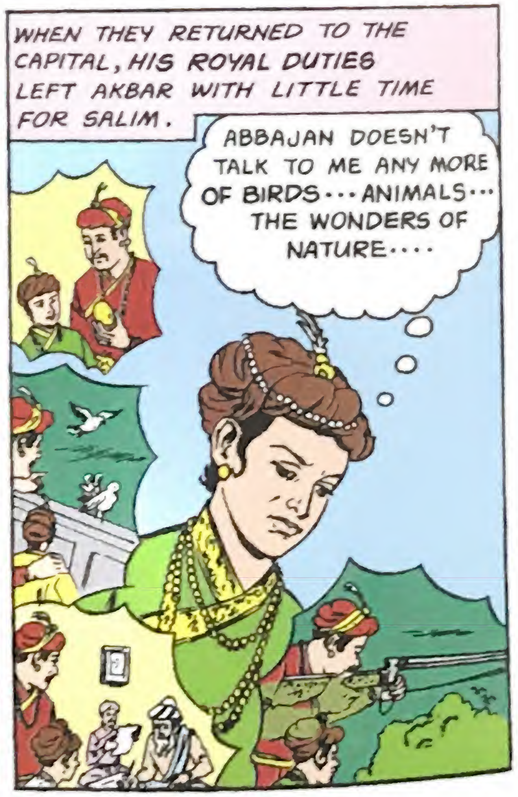
THE FAMOUS OLD MAULANA, ACCORDING TO CUSTOM, RAISED SALIM ON HIS SHOULDERS.

SALIM, THE CROWN PRINCE, SOON BECAME THE DARLING OF THE PALACE AND THE PRIDE OF HIS FATHER.

WHEN SALIM WAS BARELY TWELVE, HE AND HIS BROTHER, MURAD, FOUGHT IN THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST KABUL.

THE MUGHAL ARMY EMERGED VICTORIOUS AND AKBAR CAME TO KABUL.
WAS IT AN EXCITING CAMPAIGN, MY SONS?

NOT VERY.
BUT THIS LAND OF OUR GREAT-GRANDFATHER IS BEAUTIFUL, ABBAJAN,*


WHEN THEY RETURNED TO THE CAPITAL, HIS ROYAL DUTIES LEFT AKBAR WITH LITTLE TIME FOR SALIM.
ABBAJAN DOESN'T TALK TO ME ANY MORE OF BIRDS... ANIMALS... THE WONDERS OF NATURE....

* FATHER

UNABLE TO BEAR HIS BELOVED FATHER'S NEGLECT ANY LONGER, SALIM COMPLAINED TO HIS GRANDMOTHER, HAMIDA BEGUM.
ABBAJAN NO LONGER CARES FOR ME.
YOU ARE MISTAKEN. HE LOVES YOU. BUT THE CARES OF THE VAST EMPIRE CLAIM ALL HIS TIME.

IS IT THE EMPIRE OR THAT DRONE, ABUL FAZL?
ABUL FAZL, THE GREAT SCHOLAR, WAS AKBAR'S FAVOURITE COURTIER.

WHEN SALIM WAS FIFTEEN, HE MARRIED MAN BAI, HIS RAJPUT COUBIN.

WITHIN A COUPLE OF YEARS, MAN BAI BORE HIM TWO CHILDREN — FIRST A DAUGHTER; THEN A SON, WHO WAS NAMED KHUSRAU.
MY QUEEN, OUR SON SHALL BE MY HEIR.

SALIM ENJOYED A SPELL OF PEACE AND JOY TILL, ONE DAY —

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE NOBLES ARE TALKING ABOUT NOW ? ABUL FAZL'S POWER— THE POWER HE HAS COME TO HAVE OVER THE EMPEROR AND THE EMPIRE !

ABUL FAZL HAS ROBBED ME OF MY FATHER'S AFFECTIONS. WILL HE ROB ME OF MY THRONE TOO ?

SALIM, HOWEVER, DID NOT HAVE TIME TO BROOD OVER THIS MATTER AS HE HAD TO ACCOMPANY HIS FATHER TO KASHMIR ON A MILITARY CAMPAIGN.

ISN'T IT BEAUTIFUL HERE ?

YES, IT IS, SHAIKHU BABA. WE SHOULDN'T HAVE LEFT THE WOMEN AT BHIMBAR.

THEY'D HAVE LOVED TO SEE THIS PLACE. GO, SHAIKHU BABA. BRING THEM HERE!

SALIM AND HIS COMPANION SOON REACHED BHIMBAR. BUT, WHILE THEY WERE RETURNING WITH THE WOMEN, THERE WAS A SUDDEN SNOWFALL. THEY COULD BARELY SEE AHEAD OF THEM.

NATURE CAN BE AS CRUEL AS SHE'S BEAUTIFUL! IT'S DANGEROUS TO TAKE THE CARAVAN ANY FURTHER.

STAY HERE WITH THE WOMEN. I'LL RIDE ON AND INFORM THE EMPEROR.

TOWARDS EVENING, AKBAR, WHO WAS EAGERLY LOOKING FORWARD TO THE ARRIVAL OF THE CARAVAN, SAW SALIM RIDING UP ALONE.

WHERE ARE THE OTHERS ? WHY HASN'T HE BROUGHT THEM ?

WHEN SALIM EXPLAINED WHY HE HADN'T, AKBAR FLEW INTO A RAGE AND IGNORING HIM TURNED TO ABUL FAZL.

IT WAS NOT FOR SHAIKHU BABA TO DECIDE! IT WAS FOR HIM TO OBEY! HAD I SENT MURAD ON THIS MISSION, HE WOULDN'T HAVE FAILED ME!

FATHER!

HURT AND PERPLEXED BY AKBAR'S UNREASONABLE ANGER, SALIM SHUT HIMSELF UP IN HIS TENT AND NEITHER ATE NOR SLEPT.

COULD HE SEE ONLY DISOBEDIENCE AND NOT INTELLIGENCE IN WHAT I DID?

IS THIS THE FAITH HE HAS IN ME, THE HEIR TO HIS THRONE?

AND SO BEGAN THE ESTRANGEMENT OF THE SON FROM THE FATHER.

ON THE WAY TO KASHMIR, AT KANBAL, AKBAR VISITED THE HERMIT, WAHID SUFI.

WHEN HE CAME OUT HE SAW SALIM AND ABUL FAZL WAITING FOR HIM.

GO WITH ABUL FAZL AND PAY YOUR RESPECTS TO THE HERMIT, SHAIKHU BABA.

AS SALIM STOOD WITH ABUL FAZL, IN FRONT OF THE SUFI MYSTIC —

YOU HAVE ALREADY BLESSED MY FATHER, THE WORLD'S LORD. AND NOW I IMPLORE YOU TO BLESS HIS SON, THE HEIR TO THE THRONE, WHO STANDS BEFORE YOU.

THE SON AND HEIR SHOULD OBTAIN HIS BLESSINGS FROM HIS FATHER.

THE REPLY WAS A SNUB, BUT SALIM FORGOT ABOUT IT BECAUSE IT WAS THEN THAT HIS SECOND SON, PARVEZ, WAS BORN.

BUT ABUL FAZL DID NOT FORGET. HE REPORTED TO AKBAR THE WORDS SPOKEN BY SALIM. THE EMPEROR WAS LOST IN THOUGHT FOR A WHILE. THEN—

HAS SHAIKHU BABA BECOME IMPATIENT TO ASCEND THE THRONE? IS HE NOT CONTENT TO BE THE CROWN PRINCE?

THE PRINCE IS INNOCENT, JAHANPANAH. BUT HIS COMPANIONS ARE BAD. I HEAR THAT ONE OF THEM EVEN ENCOURAGES HIM TO DRINK WINE!

TWO YEARS LATER, AKBAR GAVE MURAD AN INDEPENDENT COMMAND.

TO SULTAN MURAD, WHO IS FIT FOR SUCH HONOURS, I PRESENT A STANDARD, A KETTLE-DRUM, AN UMBRELLA AND A BANNER. AND I GIVE HIM MALWA AS HIS FIEF.

LATER, THE FRIEND WHO HAD INTRODUCED HIM TO WINE, CAME TO SEE SALIM.

THERE! DIDN'T I SAY SO? THE SHAHENSHAH HAS OPENLY PREFERRED MURAD TO YOU. HE HAS GIVEN AN INDEPENDENT COMMAND TO YOUR YOUNGER BROTHER— NOT TO YOU!

I LOVE MY FATHER, BUT WHEN HE DOESN'T TRUST ME, HOW CAN I TRUST HIM?

AND YET, WHEN AKBAR WAS SEIZED WITH AN ATTACK OF ACUTE COLIC, SALIM RUSHED TO HIS PALACE.

SEND THE HAKIM TO ME.

O, GOD, SAVE THE LIFE OF MY BELOVED FATHER!

AFTER TAKING THE HAKIM'S MEDICINE, HOWEVER, AKBAR FELT WORSE AND BECAME DELIRIOUS.

ABUL FAZL... HAVE I BEEN POISONED?... HAS MY HAKIM BEEN BOUGHT OVER BY... SHAIKHU BABA?

O SHAIKHU BABA... SINCE THE EMPIRE... WILL ULTIMATELY COME TO YOU... WHY HAVE YOU... MADE THIS ATTEMPT ON MY LIFE...?

ABBAJAN!

...THERE WAS NO NEED TO POISON ME ...I'D HAVE GIVEN YOU THE THRONE... IF YOU'D ASKED ME FOR IT!

ABBAJAN! SUCH HARSH WORDS! FROM YOU?

SALIM WALKED OUT OF THE ROOM TO HIDE HIS TEARS.

HAS IT COME TO THIS? IF, IN HIS PAIN, HE HAD TO ACCUSE SOMEONE, WHY DIDN'T HE CHOOSE ABUL FAZL OR ANYONE ELSE?

LATER —

IT'S ABUL FAZL WHO HAS TURNED THE EMPEROR AGAINST YOU, SALIM.

I KNOW. HE WANTS TO KEEP CLOSE TO THE EMPEROR AT ANY COST.

THE BIRTH OF YET ANOTHER SON, HOWEVER, HELPED SALIM TO FORGET HIS BITTERNESS FOR A WHILE.

KHURRAM, MY SON, MAY YOU BRING JOY TO ME!

AS HE GREW UP, KHURRAM COMPLETELY WON THE AFFECTION OF AKBAR.

HE'S MAGNIFICENT — A REAL SULTAN! THERE'S NO COMPARISON BETWEEN KHURRAM AND YOUR OTHER SONS.

WHY THIS COMPARISON, ABBAJAN? KHUSRAU IS MY FIRST SON. THE YOUNGER ONES MAY BE MORE ENDEARING, BUT THE STATUS OF THE FIRST SON CAN NEVER BE THEIRS.

MEANWHILE, MURAD WHO WAS IN THE DECCAN, DIED AND ABUL FAZL WAS SENT TO REPLACE HIM. AS THE LEADER OF THE MUGHAL FORCES.

SALIM! ABUL FAZL IS ON HIS WAY TO AHMADNAGAR! HE PLANS TO TAKE THE FORT.

OBVIOUSLY HE WANTS TO IMPRESS UPON THE EMPEROR THAT HE IS AS FINE A SOLDIER AS A SCHOLAR.

SOON AFTER THAT, ONE DAY, AT COURT —

SHAIKHU BABA, I'VE DECIDED TO GO TO MALWA. I WANT YOU TO MARCH TO MEWAR AND SUBDUE RANA AMAR SINGH WHO HAS BEEN A THORN IN OUR FLESH FOR LONG ENOUGH.

I WILL, JAHANPANAH, BY YOUR GRACE.

AKBAR'S DEPARTURE, HOWEVER, UNLEASHED THE YOUTHFUL SPIRIT OF SALIM WHO HAD BEEN DENIED AN INDEPENDENT COMMAND FOR TOO LONG.

I'LL SEND MY FORCES TO MEWAR AND GO TO AJMER!

AT AJMER, FAR AWAY FROM THE RESTRAINING PRESENCE OF HIS FATHER, SALIM SPENT HIS NEW-FOUND FREEDOM IN SPORT AND RIOTOUS LIVING.

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL DANCING GIRL!

IT WAS THEN THAT ONE OF HIS COMPANIONS CAME UP WITH AN IDEA.

SULTAN SALIM! THE EMPEROR IS NOW IN THE DECCAN. THE NORTH IS UNGUARDED. WHY DON'T WE SEIZE THE TREASURES OF AGRA AND INVADE THE PROVINCE OF PUNJAB?

SALIM, WHO HAD NEVER THOUGHT OF AN OPEN REVOLT, HESITATED.

BUT MY FORCES ARE AT MEWAR!

THEN RECALL THEM!

SALIM RECALLED HIS FORCES AND MARCHED TOWARDS AGRA. WHEN HE REACHED THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY, HOWEVER —

HAMIDA BEGUM WILL SOON BE CALLING ON YOU. SHE HAS SET OUT FROM HER PALACE.

NO! MY BELOVED GRANDMOTHER ON HER WAY TO SEE ME!

HOW CAN I FACE HER? I MUST LEAVE AT ONCE!

ORDERING HIS TROOPS TO FOLLOW BY LAND, SALIM LEFT FOR ALLAHABAD.

ON REACHING ALLAHABAD, HE DECLARED HIMSELF KING.

MY RULE SHALL EXTEND OVER BIHAR AND THE TREASURY THERE SHALL BE UNDER MY CONTROL!

WHEN AKBAR HEARD OF SALIM'S REVOLT, HE HURRIED BACK TO AGRA.

MOTHER, IS ALL I HAVE HEARD ABOUT SHAIKHU BABA TRUE?

I... WE... YES... IT'S TRUE. BUT DON'T BE HARSH WITH HIM, AKBAR. IF SALIM HAS REBELLED, AREN'T WE TO BLAME?

BUT WHY DID HE DO IT? HE KNOWS THAT HE'LL BE EMPEROR AFTER ME!

HE'S THIRTY! YOU'VE HELD HIM IN LEASH FOR TOO LONG. BESIDES YOUR SEVERE MOVES AGAINST HIM AND THE COURT INTRIGUES HAVE UNSETTLED HIM. HE'LL COME TO HIS SENSES.

AS HAMIDA BEGUM HAD PREDICTED, SALIM DID COME TO HIS SENSES.

A PETITION FROM SULTAN SALIM, JAHANPANAH. IT SAYS: "I SEEK PERMISSION TO MEET THE EMPEROR AS I AM GRIEVED AT OUR SEPARATION."

PERMISSION IS NOT GRANTED.

SALIM RESPONDED BY SETTING OUT FOR AGRA AT THE HEAD OF A HUGE ARMY. BUT BEFORE HE COULD REACH AGRA, AN ENVOY FROM AKBAR INTERCEPTED HIM.

THE EMPEROR DESIRES THAT YOU EITHER CALL ON HIM UNATTENDED OR RETURN TO ALLAHABAD.

THEN I'LL RETURN TO ALLAHABAD.

A FEW WEEKS LATER —

WE HAVE NEWS FOR YOU, SULTAN SALIM!

ABUL FAZL HAS POISONED THE EMPEROR'S MIND AGAINST YOU!

THERE'S NO DOUBT THAT HE'S TRYING TO DISGRACE YOU AND HAVE YOU CONDEMNED.

SO MY ENEMY IS AT HIS OLD GAME AGAIN! I MUST PREVENT HIM FROM MEETING MY FATHER.

A FEW DAYS LATER, BIR SINGH DEO, A BUNDELA CHIEFTAIN, RECEIVED A MESSAGE FROM SALIM.

"... IF YOU SUCCEED IN KILLING ABUL FAZL WHO POISONS MY FATHER'S MIND, YOU SHALL RECEIVE EVERY KINDNESS FROM ME...."

A FEW MONTHS LATER, AS AKBAR RELAXED IN HIS DOVECOTE, LITTLE DID HE FORESEE THE TRAGEDY THAT WAS IN STORE FOR HIM.

JAHANPANAH, ABUL FAZL HAS BEEN ASSASSINATED, NEAR SIRONJ!

AKBAR IMMEDIATELY GUESSED WHO WAS BEHIND THE MURDER.

IF IT WAS THE THRONE YOU COVETED SHAIKHU BABA, YOU SHOULD HAVE KILLED ME AND SPARED MY FRIEND!

AS IF TO ADD TO HIS PROBLEMS, SOON AFTER ABUL FAZL'S DEATH, AKBAR LEARNT THAT DANIYAL HAD BEGUN DRINKING HEAVILY.

...HE HAS ALSO FAILED TO SEND US THE ELEPHANTS CAPTURED IN BATTLES, JAHANPANAH.

ORDER HIM TO RETURN TO COURT IMMEDIATELY!

TO AKBAR'S ASTONISHMENT, DANIYAL SENT A REPLY WHICH IN EFFECT SAID THAT HE HAD NO INTENTION OF OBEYING THE ORDER.

SHAIKHU BABA IS THE ONLY ONE WHO HAS AT LEAST TRIED TO OBEY MY WISHES....

HAMIDA BEGUM, TOO, HAD HEARD ABOUT DANIYAL'S ATTITUDE. WHEN AKBAR CAME TO SEE HER —

MY SON, YOU MUST FORGIVE SALIM AT LEAST NOW. I'M SURE HE'S LONGING FOR A RECONCILIATION. HE HAS ALWAYS LOOKED UP TO YOU AND LOVED YOU—IN HIS OWN FASHION, PERHAPS.

AND YET... AND YET... HE HAD MY BELOVED FRIEND MURDERED!

CAN'T YOU FORGIVE HIM? AT LEAST, FOR THE SAKE OF THE EMPIRE?

ALL RIGHT, MOTHER, IF SHAIKHU BABA COMES TO COURT, I'LL RECEIVE HIM WITH HONOUR.

AH, MY SON, I KNEW YOU WOULD! SALIMA BEGUM HAS OFFERED TO REASSURE HIM AND BRING HIM HERE.

WHEN SALIM HEARD THAT HIS BELOVED STEPMOTHER WAS ON HER WAY TO SEE HIM AND TAKE HIM TO COURT —

I WILL GO HALF-WAY AND MEET HER.

DON'T, SULTAN SALIM! THE RECEPTION AT COURT COULD BE A TRAP. IF YOU MUST GO, THEN MARCH AT THE HEAD OF AN ARMY TO TAKE AGRA.

BUT THIS TIME, SALIM'S OWN GOOD SENSE CAME TO HIS RESCUE. HE IGNORED THE COUNSEL OF HIS FRIENDS AND WENT OUT TO MEET SALIMA BEGUM.

SALIM, MY SON! WHY HAVE YOU LEFT US? COME BACK TO AGRA.

MOTHER, HOW I HAVE LONGED TO COME TO AGRA AND MEET ALL OF YOU! HOW I LONG FOR A LOOK OF PARDON FROM MY FATHER!

WHEN SALIM ARRIVED AT AGRA, HAMIDA BEGUM CAME OUT TO RECEIVE HIM.

SALIM, YOU'LL COME TO MY APARTMENTS FIRST. I WILL PRESENT YOU TO YOUR FATHER.

LATER WHEN AKBAR CAME TO THE ZENANA —

SALIM HAS ASKED THE ASTROLOGERS TO FIX AN AUSPICIOUS HOUR FOR THE MEETING.

ANY MOMENT IS AUSPICIOUS IF IT LEADS TO HARMONY AND PEACE, MOTHER. WHERE IS HE ?

AS AKBAR STRODE INTO THE CHAMBER—

YOU ARE FORGIVEN, MY SON!

REMOVING HIS TURBAN, AKBAR PLACED IT ON SALIM'S HEAD.

YOU SHALL BE PROCLAIMED THE HEIR APPARENT!

THE FESTIVITIES THAT FOLLOWED THE RECONCILIATION FILLED THE CITY OF AGRA WITH JOY AND MERRIMENT.

PERMITTING SALIM TO RETURN TO ALLAHABAD, AKBAR KEPT HIMSELF INFORMED OF SALIM'S MOVES.

JAHANPANAH, HE'S UNPREDICTABLE: GENEROUS ONE MOMENT, CRUEL THE NEXT!

EXCESSIVE DRINKING HAS DEPRIVED HIM OF A SENSE OF BALANCE.

THE FOLLOWING YEAR WHEN, AT THE DEATH OF HIS BELOVED GRANDMOTHER, SALIM CAME TO COURT, AKBAR WELCOMED HIM WARMLY IN PUBLIC.

ABBAJAN! I'VE NEVER KNOWN SUCH WARMTH FROM YOU! I'M OVERWHELMED.

BUT LATER, WHEN AKBAR MET SALIM PRIVATELY —

SHAIKHU BABA, YOU'VE TRANSGRESSED MANY TIMES AND ON EACH OCCASION, I'VE FORGIVEN YOU. AS THE HEIR APPARENT YOU CANNOT BE SO WAYWARD.

THEN TO SALIM'S SURPRISE, AKBAR TURNED TO HIS ATTENDANTS.

CONFINE THE PRINCE IN HIS CHAMBER, AND DEPRIVE HIM OF WINE AND HIS COMPANIONS.

ABBAJAN!

AS SOON AS THE ATTENDANTS HAD LEFT SALIM IN A PRIVATE ROOM, HIS SISTERS CAME TO VISIT HIM.

SALIM, DON'T BE UPSET. ABBAJAN IS UNDER SEVERE STRAIN AND HE'S GROWING OLD.

HE CAN'T BEAR TO SEE YOU SLANDERED BY THE PUBLIC.

THEN THEY WENT TO AKBAR —

ABBAJAN, SALIM IS FULL OF REPENTANCE.

PARDON HIM, ABBAJAN. WE HAVE ONLY ONE BROTHER WITH US. WE'D LIKE TO SEE HIM HAPPY!

IT TOOK AKBAR TEN DAYS TO RELENT. FINALLY HE SET HIS ERRING SON FREE.

BUT SALIM'S DETRACTORS AT COURT WERE EVER ACTIVE. ONE DAY TWO OF THEM CAME TO SEE AKBAR.

WE'VE COME TO TALK ABOUT YOUR SUCCESSOR, JAHANPANAH.

IT WOULD BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE EMPIRE TO SET ASIDE SALIM'S CLAIMS AND NAME YOUR GRAND-SON, KHUSRAU, YOUR SUCCESSOR.

THIS SUGGESTION COMING FROM AZIZ KOKA AND MAN SINGH, TWO OF HIS LEADING COURTIERS, STUNNED AKBAR.

I'LL ANNOUNCE MY DECISION IN THE DURBAR TOMORROW.

O, SHAIKHU BABA, HOW HAVE MATTERS COME TO SUCH A PASS? WHAT HAS GONE WRONG AND WHERE?

THAT NIGHT THE EMPEROR SECRETLY FERRIED HIMSELF TO SALIM'S PALACE.

ABBAJAN! IT'S YOU!

SHAIKHU BABA, I'VE COME TO TAKE YOU HOME.

FOR THREE HOURS, FATHER AND SON WERE CLOSETED TOGETHER. THEY OPENED THEIR HEARTS OUT TO EACH OTHER AS THEY HAD NOT DONE FOR MANY YEARS.

THE NEXT DAY, AT THE DURBAR —

THE MINISTERS SHALL HENCEFORTH MANAGE THE AFFAIRS OF THE KINGDOM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ADVICE OF SULTAN SALIM.

A FEW MONTHS LATER, A CONTEST WAS ARRANGED ON THE BANK OF THE YAMUNA, BETWEEN SALIM'S STRONGEST ELEPHANT AND KHUSRAU'S. ALL THE NOBLEMEN OF AGRA HAD COME TO WATCH.

IS THE EMPEROR LOOKING FOR AN OMEN?

WHY SHOULD HE? HE'S OBVIOUSLY DECIDED UPON SULTAN SALIM AS HIS HEIR.

AKBAR HAD HIS FAVOURITE GRANDSON, KHURRAM, SEATED NEXT TO HIM.

CRASHING THROUGH THE MUD WALL BETWEEN THEM ...

...THE ANIMALS CHARGED.

GET HIM, GIRANBAR!

MY APURVA IS GOING DOWN!

SALIM'S ELEPHANT, GIRANBAR, WAS CLEARLY GETTING THE BETTER OF KHUSRAU'S ELEPHANT, APURVA.

BUT, IN THE NICK OF TIME, THE EMPEROR'S ELEPHANT RUSHED TO APURVA'S RESCUE. SALIM'S SUPPORTERS RAISED A HUE AND CRY, BUT HE TRIED TO CALM THEM DOWN.

THAT'S NOT FAIR! PULL HIM BACK!

LET HIM GO, MY MEN!

ENRAGED, SALIM'S ELEPHANT MADE A DASH AT THE INTRUDER ...

...AND SENT HIM REELING.

VICTORY TO SALIM!

CALM DOWN, MY MEN! RESTRAIN YOURSELVES!

AKBAR WAS PERTURBED BY THE TURN THE EVENTS WERE TAKING.

O GOD! DON'T LET THE RIVALRY BETWEEN SALIM AND KHUSRAU WEAKEN THE EMPIRE AFTER ME!

THAT NIGHT, HE HAD AN ATTACK OF FEVER AND DIARRHOEA. AS THE EMPEROR LAY FIGHTING FOR HIS LIFE, THE COURTIERS WERE BUSY PLOTTING.

I'VE FILLED ALL THE POSTS IN THE FORT WITH MY MEN. I'LL ARREST SALIM WHEN HE COMES TO VISIT THE EMPEROR.

UNAWARE OF THE PLOT, SALIM SET OUT FOR THE EMPEROR'S PALACE.

O GOD, GIVE STRENGTH TO ABBAJAN. LET HIM LIVE.

AT THE FOOT OF THE TOWER, AS HE WAS ABOUT TO DISEMBARK FROM THE BOAT—

DON'T, SULTAN SALIM! WAIT!

AZIZ KOKA AND MAN SINGH PLAN TO ARREST YOU THE MOMENT YOU ENTER THE EMPEROR'S PALACE!

WHEN THEY LEARNT THAT SALIM HAD BEEN WARNED, MAN SINGH AND AZIZ KOKA HAD TO COME OUT IN THE OPEN. THEY CALLED A MEETING OF THE NOBLES AND ARGUED FOR THE SUPERSESSION OF SALIM BY KHUSRAU.

THE CHARACTER OF SULTAN SALIM IS NO SECRET TO YOU. WE SHOULD INSTALL KHUSRAU AS THE NEXT EMPEROR.

BUT SAYYAD KHAN BARHA, AN ELDERLY AND RESPECTED COURTIER, VEHEMENTLY OPPOSED THE PROPOSAL.

WHAT YOU PROPOSE IS AGAINST THE TRADITION OF OUR RACE. SULTAN SALIM IS THE RIGHTFUL HEIR. IN PROTEST, I'M WALKING OUT. THOSE WHO AGREE WITH ME MAY FOLLOW ME.

MAN SINGH AND AZIZ COULD NOT BELIEVE THEIR EYES. ALMOST ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY FOLLOWED SAYYAD BARHA!

I WOULD NEVER HAVE DREAMT THAT PRINCE SALIM HAD SO MANY TO SUPPORT HIM. EVEN THE RAJPUTS WHOM YOU COUNTED ON HAVE LET US DOWN, MAN SINGH!

THE PLOT HAD BEEN NIPPED IN THE BUD!

BEFORE THE DAY WAS OUT, ALL SALIM'S ERSTWHILE OPPONENTS JOINED HIM. AZIZ KOKA WAS AMONG THEM.

THE MERCIFUL SULTAN SALIM WILL PARDON US. WE WERE MISLED.

YOU ARE FORGIVEN. YOU SHALL GO FREE AND UNHURT.

A REASSURED SALIM AT LAST WENT TO VISIT HIS BELOVED FATHER. HE WAS JUST IN TIME. THE EMPEROR WAS GASPING FOR BREATH.

SHAIKHU BABA, YOU'VE COME AT LAST. HOW LONG I HAVE WAITED FOR YOU!

HE SIGNED TO THE ATTENDANT TO INVEST THE PRINCE WITH HIS OWN TURBAN AND ROBES AND TO GIRD HIM WITH HIS OWN DAGGER.

THEN THEY PAID THEIR LAST HOMAGE TO THE DYING EMPEROR.

THE NEXT MOMENT —

DEAR, DEAR ABBAJAN! THERE'S SO MUCH I NEEDED TO KNOW ABOUT RULING THIS VAST EMPIRE. WHY WERE YOU IN SUCH HASTE TO REACH THE ETERNAL REALMS?

A WEEK LATER, SALIM ASCENDED THE THRONE IN THE FORT OF AGRA. THERE WAS NO ANOINTING, NO OATH AND NO SERMON. SALIM SIMPLY PLACED THE CROWN ON HIS HEAD WITH HIS OWN HANDS.

LET THE PUBLIC PRAYERS BE READ IN THE NAME OF NUR-UD-DIN MUHAMMED JAHANGIR PADSHAH GHAZI.

CONTRARY TO THE PREDICTIONS OF HIS DETRACTORS, JAHANGIR KEPT HIS WORD ABOUT FORGIVING POLITICAL OPPONENTS. HE PATTERNED HIS RULE ON THAT OF THE BENEVOLENT AKBAR, WHOM HE HAD LOVED, ADMIRED AND WORSHIPPED.